

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

The specification has been amended as follows:

Pages 2-3

The paragraph beginning on page 2, line 15 and ending on page 3, line 10 has been amended as follows:

ad The present invention provides a sample suction apparatus comprising: a first member, a second ~~member and member~~, and a third member capable of linearly reciprocating along the same direction and spaced apart from each other, the second member being located between the first member and the third member; a drive source provided on the third member to enlarge and reduce a distance between the first member and the third member; an elastically compressible spacer inserted between the second member and the third member; and a suction needle provided on the third member, the suction needle pointing to the first member, wherein the drive source reduces the distance between the first member and the third member to perform: a first action of shifting the first member toward the third member to contact the first member with a portion of a specimen vessel; a second action of shifting the second member together with the third member toward the first member

Q2 to contact the second member with another portion of the specimen vessel so that the specimen vessel is sandwiched between the first and second members; and a third action of shifting the third member toward the first member to compress the spacer to bring the third member close to the second member so that the suction needle is inserted in the specimen vessel.

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The paragraph at lines 2-3 has been amended as follows:

Q3 Fig. 3 is a sectional view cut along a line A-A line III-III shown in Fig. 1;

The paragraph at lines 13-17 has been amended as follows:

Q4 The first, ~~second and second~~, and third member according to the present invention may be sliders mounted on a linear rail. For example, commercially available RSR-ZM type sliders manufactured by THK Co., Ltd. may be utilized. In this case, a single rail, or two or three parallel rails may be used.

The paragraph at lines 18-22 has been amended as follows:

Q5 It is suitable that the drive source according to the present invention reciprocates linearly. As such a drive source, ~~may be used are~~ a fluid pressure cylinder (e.g., an

05 air cylinder and a hydraulic cylinder), an electric cylinder driven by a motor and the like may be used.

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The paragraph at lines 6-11 has been amended as follows:

06 The apparatus of the present invention may further comprise a sensor for detecting ~~the completion~~ completion of the second action. With the sensor, all the actions may be recovered from a state where the specimen vessel does not exist between the first and second members or a state where the specimen vessel is not properly introduced.

The paragraph at lines ~~16-19~~ has been amended as follows:

07 Fig. 1 is a front view for illustrating a sample suction apparatus according to an embodiment of the present invention, Fig. 2 is a bottom view for illustrating the same and Fig. 3 is a sectional view cut along a ~~line A-A~~ line III-III shown in Fig. 1.

Pages 6-7

The paragraph beginning on page 6, line 20 and ending on page 7, line 1 has been amended as follows:

08 As shown in these figures, a single rail 2 is fitted to a flap portion provided in a lower part of a substrate 1. Sliders 3, ~~4 and 5~~ 4, and 5 are slidably mounted on the rail

Q8 2, which are capable of linearly reciprocating along the rail 2, respectively. On the slider 5, an air cylinder 7, a suction needle (hereinafter referred to as a piercer) ~~8~~ and 8, and a spring supporting part 9 are mounted via a mounting part 6.

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Page 8

The paragraph at lines 16-17 has been amended as follows:

Q9 The relationship in spring coefficient between the compressible springs 21, ~~22 and 25~~ 22, and 25 is established as follows:

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Page 11

The paragraph at lines 4-10 has been amended as follows:

Q10 In the case where the photointerrupter 26 is not actuated while shifting from the state of Fig. 5(b) to the state of Fig. 5(c), a control section (not shown) judges that the specimen vessel 15 is ~~absence~~ absent or introduced improperly between the supporting part 14 and the washing bath 11, and then returns the sample suction apparatus to the state of Fig. 5(a).

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Page 12

The paragraph at lines 9-20 has been amended as follows:

After a specimen in one of the specimen vessels 15 at the front is stirred with the stirrer 111, the rack 126 moves by a predetermined distance (an arrangement pitch among the specimen vessels 15 on the rack 126). The specimen vessel 15 immediately after subjected to stirring is held by a hand ~~clipper 112~~clipper 117 and withdrawn from the rack 126 to suck up the specimen (blood) by a suction apparatus 115, and then returned to the rack 126. The sucked specimen is quantified by a quantitative measurement part 113 and analyzed by an analysis part 114. While the suction apparatus 115 sucks up the specimen from the ~~front~~preceding specimen vessel, the stirrer 111 stirs a specimen contained in the next specimen vessel 15.